

VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #2419/01 3041342
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 301342Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8933
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 4548
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1151
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4927
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5350
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4567
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2940
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5330
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2186
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0411
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 9146
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 6635
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1562
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5648
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7623
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0476
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0691
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002419

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Leading media quoted officials in Jerusalem as saying yesterday that PM Ehud Olmert will meet President Bush in the U.S. before Bush leaves the White House in January. HaQaretz also quoted a senior Palestinian official as saying yesterday that the Quartet of Middle East peacemakers will meet November 6 at Sharm el-Sheikh to assess

progress in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

All media quoted Yisrael Beiteinu leader, MK Avigdor Lieberman, as saying yesterday before the Knesset plenum that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak should Qgo to hell.Q President Shimon Peres and PM Ehud Olmert apologized to Mubarak. In another development, Mubarak was quoted as saying in an interview with Yediot that Israel will receive a letter from Gilad Shalit. He said that the Palestinians will not harm Shalit.

The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior Shas source as saying yesterday that it would be a mistake for Shas to forge close ties with Benjamin NetanyahuQs Likud. The newspaper commented that the remark doused rumors of a Shas-Likud alliance heading into the election season. The Jerusalem Post further quoted the source as saying that Shas should stay away from a man who generates a lot of antagonism. The media quoted Netanyahu as saying that he will not give the education portfolio to Shas but keep it for the Likud. Maariv reported that Netanyahu intends to hire an adviser to Barack Obama or John McCain for his campaign. Maariv and other media reported that, in an effort to woo the Russian immigrant vote, Kadima chairwoman Tzipi Livni is distancing herself from the ultra-Orthodox and trying to promote alternative marriages. Israel Radio reported that today Livni offered Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz the No. 2 slot on KadimaQs list and the management of the partyQs elections campaign. The radio quoted Labor Chairman Ehud Barak assaying that his party will hold primaries.

HaQaretz reported that the McCain campaign has started airing a clip purportedly accusing Barack Obama of not taking the Iranian threat seriously. Leading media reported that the McCain campaign is using ObamaQs link to Palestinian advocate and former University of Chicago professor Rashid Khalidi to hammer away at Obama, and that it demanded yesterday that The Los Angeles Times release a video in its possession showing Obama giving a toast at a goodbye party for his Chicago colleague. HaQaretz cited a Reuters report that yesterday in Florida, Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Joe Biden sought to reassure Jewish voters of his and Barack ObamaQs commitment to Israel.

Israel Radio reported that DM Ehud Barak closed all crossings to Gaza following Qassam rocket fire on the western Negev.

Leading media reported that the U.S. announced yesterday that it closed its embassy in Damascus for security reasons.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday the High Court of Justice made it clear to the 20 Jewish families occupying a disputed building on QWorshippersQ WayQ in Hebron that they would not be allowed to continue living there, and urged them to withdraw a petition filed on their behalf and leave the building voluntarily. If not, it seems certain that the police will forcibly evict them from what they call Beit Shalom.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Islamic Movement in Israel vowed to fight a ruling handed down by the High Court of Justice yesterday that the Simon Wiesenthal Center-affiliated Museum of Tolerance could be built on its planned site in central Jerusalem even though it was part of the old, deconsecrated Mamila Muslim cemetery.

All media reported on an academic strike that threatens to paralyze IsraelQs universities, with HaQaretz demanding extensive reforms and streamlining in academia. Hundreds of students and lecturers demonstrated in front of the Knesset yesterday.

HaQaretz and Israel Radio cited the belief of Dr. Eilat Mazar, an archeologist excavating the City of David, the most ancient part of Jerusalem, that the "gutter," or water system mentioned in the Bible as the way King David's men conquered Jerusalem, may have been found.

Leading media reported that the government decided on Wednesday during a meeting headed by DM Barak and attended by the country's top military and legal brass that Israel will reduce government services to illegal outposts in the West Bank in a bid to combat settler violence. Major media reported that yesterday the High

Court of Justice agreed to allow far- Right activists Itamar Ben-Gvir and Baruch Marzel to lead a mid-November march through the Israeli-Arab city of Umm al-Fahm. While the Association for Civil Rights welcomed the decision, the Israeli Arab leadership was appalled. Leading media reported that yesterday a synagogue in the mixed city of Lod was set on fire.

Leading media reported that the second Free Gaza protest boat docked off the coastal strip amid stormy weather early yesterday morning, despite earlier Israeli declarations that it would not let the SS Dignity enter the Hamas-controlled territory. HaQaretz quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that the GOI changed its mind at the last minute. Israeli left-wing activist Gideon Spiro was among the boatQs 27 passengers from 13 countries.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Turkish officials as saying that Turkish DM Vecdi Gonul is in Israel for a two-day visit, the focus of which is to examine a batch of unmanned aerial vehicles that Turkey is slated to acquire.

HaQaretz reported that Vatican officials are furious over Minister Isaac Herzog's statement in HaQaretz last Thursday that the planned beatification of Pope Pius XII, who headed the Catholic Church during the Holocaust, is "unacceptable."

The Jerusalem Post ran a feature story on Chicago Rabbi Caper Funnye Jr., ObamaQs cousin-in-law.

Israel Radio reported that the Israeli businessman who was abducted in Ghana managed to escape.

In its lead story, HaQaretz cited the results of a Dialogue poll according to which, if elections were held today, the right-wing camp would garner 61 Knesset seats while 58 would go to the center-left. The numbers are close, but the political difference between the blocs is much greater, and favors the right. Asked who is best equipped to deal with IsraelQs security problems, the respondents replied: Benjamin Netanyahu: 33%; Ehud Barak: 26%; and Tzipi Livni: 14%.

Mideast:

Summary:

Columnist Ari Shavit wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: QThe next Israeli government will not be the government of peace with Palestine.

Contributor Jonathan S. Tobin, executive editor of the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: QThe idea that Bush could have prevented [the Second Intifada] or lessened its impact is ridiculous, since it started on Clinton's watch, not his.

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: QKeeping [foreign sympathizers] out of Gaza has nothing to do with security and everything to do with punishment -- punishment of Gazan society as a whole. Not just the terrorists, not just Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but every man, woman and child.

Far-left columnist Meron Benvenisti wrote in Ha'aretz: QEfforts are being made [in the Peres Center for Peace] to train the Palestinian population to accept its inferiority.

Block Quotes:

II. "In the Name of Peace"

Columnist Ari Shavit wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/30): QThe next Israeli government will not be the government of peace with Palestine. In order to achieve an Israel-Palestine peace we will have to divide Jerusalem, and the next government will not divide Jerusalem. In order to achieve an Israel-Palestine peace we

will have to let refugees enter Israel, and the next government will not be able to let refugees enter Israel.... The government to be established in February or March 2009 will be far better than its predecessors. It will not lead to peace with Palestine, but perhaps it will lead to peace with Syria. The chances are good that it will seriously confront the challenge of security, the challenge of education and the challenge of law and governance. However, in order for the government to be a worthy one it must be elected in a worthy manner. If Tzipi Livni believes that she is the honest person who is worthy of becoming the prime minister in the next 100 days, she must prove it.

II. "Was He Wrong about Everything?"

Contributor Jonathan S. Tobin, executive editor of the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/30): QThe idea that Bush could have prevented [the Second Intifada] or lessened its impact is ridiculous, since it started on Clinton's watch, not his. More to the point, it was Bush, acting against the advice of Secretary of State Colin Powell, whose actions directly contributed to squelching the Intifada.... Though Democrats now claim the 2007 Annapolis conference, which Rice and Bush hosted, was too little, too late, it was just as foolish as Clinton's Camp David debacle. All it accomplished was to ratchet up the pressure on Israel again, while doing nothing to force the Palestinians to face reality and make peace. As Israel prepares to elect new leadership and faces apocalyptic threats from Iran, with no assurance that the international community will act responsibly, the next president must avoid falling into the trap of believing that every Bush precedent is to be overturned. It isn't really important whether Bush gets credit for doing the right thing about Arafat and backing Sharon's tough policies, which defeated Palestinian terror. What is important is to learn the lessons not only from Bush's mistakes, but also from those of his predecessor. If the next administration is staffed by people who embrace the Clinton Administration's delusions about Palestinian intentions, then we can expect the same results that we got the last time: more bloodshed.

III. "Doctors Aren't Terrorists"

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/30): QIf Israel has nothing against Gaza's civilians, why does it want to blockade Gaza by land and sea to keep these foreigners from going about their business? Because they're going to protest, because they're going to make us look bad? I thought we were the only democracy in the Middle East. I thought we believed in freedom of speech. Seems I was misinformed. It's stunts like these that give credence to the claim that Israel has turned Gaza into the world's biggest prison.... We say it's for security, to keep terrorists and weaponry from reaching the Strip. But medicine? Doctors from Harvard Medical School? Mairead Corrigan McGuire, who won the Nobel Peace Prize? Keeping them out of Gaza has nothing to do with security and everything to do with punishment -- punishment of Gazan society as a whole. Not just the terrorists, not just Hamas and Islamic Jihad, but every man, woman and child.

IV. "A Monument to a Lost Time and Lost Hopes"

Far-left columnist Meron Benvenisti wrote in Ha'aretz (10/30): QOnly in hindsight are we able to see the fatal damage done by the Oslo Accords, which inspired Peres to establish the center: The accords, instead of bringing about a change in the status quo, have become the pillar of a de facto binational regime (called the QoccupationQ), which has become institutionalized as a permanent regime.... In the activity of the Peres Center for Peace there is no evident effort being made to change the political and socioeconomic status quo in the occupied territories, but just the opposite: Efforts are being made to train the Palestinian population to accept its inferiority and prepare it to survive under the arbitrary constraints imposed by Israel, to guarantee the ethnic superiority of the Jews.... The Peres Center for Peace does not publish reports about the catastrophic economic situation of the Palestinians and does not warn about Israel's responsibility for this situation.

